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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000154

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: MOVING FORWARD AFTER THE GOSS REJECTS THE CENSUS
RESULTS

REF: A. 08 KHARTOUM 1740
[1](#)B. 08 KHARTOUM 1687
[1](#)C. 08 KHARTOUM 890
[1](#)D. 08 KHARTOUM 697
[1](#)E. 08 KHARTOUM 613
[1](#)F. 08 KHARTOUM 575
[1](#)G. 08 KHARTOUM 566

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Sudan census results are expected to be publicly released in February after endorsement by the Government of National Unity (GNU) Presidency, and the USG must be prepared for the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) to reject the results. The GoSS has several justifications for a rejection, including obstacles to the return of IDPs before census enumeration and logistical impediments during the census as a result of the rainy season. The GoSS also remains concerned that questions on religion and ethnicity were not included on the census questionnaires (even though the GoSS initially approved the use of the questionnaires without these items). The rejection of the results will raise questions about the power-sharing arrangement in the National Assembly (post-national elections, the percentages in the latter should be based on the census results). The rejection may also delay the process of constituency delimitation in preparation for elections and complicate the mapping of communities along the north/south border after demarcation has been completed. The most important objective, however, is not to allow the census results to derail the CPA process.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary Cot,d: While the USG should issue a public statement commending the completion of a key CPA benchmark when census results are released, it should also privately encourage the National Congress Party (NCP) to reach an accommodation on National Assembly power-sharing with the SPLM by recognizing that there were some deficiencies in the census process. The presumed accommodation would be to retain the status quo power-sharing arrangement in the National Assembly after national elections take place. An accommodation as such by the NCP would allow for the elections to move forward without significant disruption to CPA implementation. End Summary.

THE CENSUS DILEMMA

[1](#)3. (SBU) Census officials from the north and the south are merging data files in Khartoum in order to obtain the highly-anticipated national population count resulting from the 2008 census enumeration. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), officials will merge the north and

south data files to produce a "Sudan merged data set" in late January and early February. The results will be released in two phases, the first of which will be the priority results that will be presented to the Census Technical Working Group (TWG) on 16 February. Once accepted by the TWG, the priority results will be formally presented to the Population Census Council (PCC) and Southern Sudan Population Census Council (SSPCC) for their approval and then submission to the GNU Presidency; the Presidency then decides on the publication of the results.

¶4. (SBU) The merger of the data files will not only produce a national population figure, but will also generate a population percentage of those living in the north relative to those living in the south. This north/south percentage is critical because according to the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), it should inform north/south representation in the newly-elected GNU National Assembly (to be elected in 2009). Furthermore, the data should be used for the delimitation of constituencies for the 2009 electoral process and assist in mapping out communities along the final north/south border when demarcation is completed.

¶5. (C) The GoSS has made strong statements that it will reject the census results if the South's population is less than 34 percent (the current level of southern representation in the National Assembly per the CPA) (reftels B and E). The GoSS, rejection of results will be based on legitimate and politically convincing concerns that it raised before the April 2008 enumeration process, including the inability of some southern internally displaced persons (IDPs) to return home for the census exercise, the rainy season that made

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enumeration in some areas impossible, insecurity, and other factors (ref G). The GoSS is also unhappy that questions about religion and ethnicity were not included on the questionnaires that were used, even though a compromise was reached in which the GoSS agreed to print the forms without these questions included. (Note: The GoSS wanted to demonstrate that much of Sudan is neither Arab nor Muslim. End note.) These concerns spurred the GoSS to call for a last-minute delay of the census in the South last spring (ref G). During the time since the census took place in April-May 2008, several high level GoSS and SPLM officials have told USG officials (in line with their public statements) that they will not accept the final census results unless the north/south percentage break-down shows that at least one-third of the national population of Sudan resides in southern Sudan. Understandably, actual results matter to them less than their current share of political power.

¶6. (C) Furthermore, a USG-funded census technical expert who served as an advisor to the Southern Sudan Commission for the Census and Statistical Evaluation (SSCCSE) throughout the census process has alerted USG officials to potential census data irregularities. The puzzling data from the North suggests that: (a) the population of Darfur is double that of the 1993 census, and (b) the number of self-identified Southerners in Khartoum is well below UN humanitarian assistance projections for Southerner IDPs in Khartoum. UNMIS/Juba officials have also privately told USG officials that northern census data on Darfur and southern IDPs in Khartoum seems to "indicate blatant tampering." These anomalies point to potential political manipulation of northern census data by the NCP although international experts discount that claim.

MANAGING THE PROBLEM

¶7. (C) In managing the announcement of the census results and the likely GoSS rejection, the objective should be to prevent this hang-up from growing unnecessarily into still another crisis between the CPA parties. Post suggests that the USG should be prepared to: (1) issue a public statement when final census figures are made public commending the

completion of the census but recognizing that there were some problems, and encouraging the parties to move forward on elections and other parts of the CPA; and (2) privately manage the situation between the parties to prevent a crisis, including encouraging the NCP to recognize that there were problems with the census and reach a consensus with the SPLM to continue with the status quo power-sharing arrangement in the National Assembly and move towards elections; clearly, an accommodation on the power-sharing arrangement with the SPLM in the National Assembly to be elected in 2009 will be required. This strategy will potentially expose the US to criticism that we are in league with the SPLM and will support them at all costs (this is not the first time we will have heard such criticism). Therefore we will need to be nuanced in our messages and not reject the census results outright (unless there is compelling evidence of tampering, which is possible, as noted above), while pointing out that the critical objective is to move toward elections and keep the CPA on track.

FERNANDEZ